

R E M A R K S

In the Office Action claims 1, 4, 5 and 9 were objected to on the informalities mentioned in the Office Action. The claims have been amended by adopting the Examiner's suggestion of identifying the connecting elements by the labels "first", "second" and "third".

Claims 1-9 and 11 were rejected under 35 USC 102(e) as anticipated by Jyawook US Patent 6,276,743 on the grounds set forth in the Office Action. Claim 10 was rejected under 35 USC 103(a) as unpatentable over Jyawook US Patent 6,276,743 in view of Weyerstall US Patent 6,050,117 for the reasons stated in the Office Action.

Reconsideration of these rejections is requested in view of the amendment and the argument herein.

The cited art is distinguishable from the present invention. Actually patent no. US 6,276,743 (Jyawook et al) only discloses a locking system such as set out in lines 6-14 on page 2 of the present specification. To emphasize the distinction between the present invention and Jyawook, there is inserted the following passage to the independent claims 1, 9 and 11, namely:

that the driver elements are located at a distance from the door lock.

With respect to the claims, as amended, the following comparison is noted between Jyawook and the present invention.

Jyawook et al describes an operating arrangement for a sliding door corresponding to the preamble of claim 1. However, it is clear from Fig. 10 of Jyawook that both the connecting elements from the outer door handle to the door lock and the inner door handle to the door lock extend over the whole length of the door and in addition another connecting element runs from the door lock to the latching device.

Therefore, Jyawook et al represents prior art in accordance with the prior art mentioned in lines 6-14 on page 2 of the specification and presents problems during opening of the latching device in respect with an unfavourable operating performance with an undefined release point because of the long distances and cumulative tolerances of the connecting elements.

In order, to overcome these problems, the present invention provides for the use of driving elements located between the two handles and the door lock, whereas Jyawook et al uses connecting elements having driving elements at their outermost ends within the door lock. It is clear that with driving elements at the outermost ends of the connecting elements, it is necessary only to have first connecting elements running from the door handles to the door lock and second connecting elements running from the door lock to the latching device. Due to the fact that, in an operating arrangement in accordance with the present invention, the driving elements are located between the door handles and the

door lock at a distance from the door lock, it is possible to reduce the overall length of the connecting elements thereby reducing cumulative tolerances. The reduction of the distance that has to be bridged by the connecting elements leads to an improved operating performance with a more precise release point.

In view of this, the present claims (the independent claims and their respective dependent claims) are not anticipated by Jyawook et al and should be patentable over the cited art.

It seems that in this matter probably a misunderstanding was caused by the fact that in claim 1, which is an English translation from the corresponding, original German priority document claim, the word "between" in claim 1 does not clearly refer to the driver elements but one could understand the phrase between the two door handles and the door lock as an explanation for the arrangement of the connecting elements. It must be clear that the word "between" shall refer to the position of the driver elements at a point between the handles and the door lock, i. e. the driver elements are located in an intermediate area of the connecting elements, while naturally the connecting elements always must connect the door handles with the door lock. In view of the cited art, the arrangement of driver elements and driven elements at a distance from the door lock both seem to be new and not obvious and therefore, all the claims should be allowable.


Attached hereto is a marked-up version of the changes made to the claims by the current amendment. The attached pages are captioned "Version with markings to show changes made."

In the event there are further issues remaining the Examiner is respectfully requested to telephone attorney to reach agreement to expedite issuance of this application.


Since the present claims set forth the present invention patentably and distinctly, and are believed to be distinguishable over the art either taken alone or in combination, this amendment is believed to place this case in condition for allowance and the Examiner is respectfully requested to reconsider the matter, enter this amendment, and to allow all of the claims in this case.

Respectfully submitted,

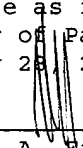
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CERTIFICATE OF MAILING UNDER 37 CFR SECTION 1.8(a)

I hereby certify that the accompanying Amendment, is  being deposited with the United States Postal Service as first class mail in an envelope addressed to: Commissioner of Patents and Trademarks, Washington, D.C. 20231, on January 28, 2003.

Dated January 28, 2003


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USA Patent Application
Martin Roos
Serial no.: 09/755,978
Filed: January 5, 2001
OPERATING ARRANGEMENT
FOR A SLIDING DOOR

VERSION WITH MARKINGS TO SHOW CHANGES MADE

IN THE CLAIMS

Please amend claims 1, 4, 5, 8, 9 and 11 as follows.

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1. (three times amended) An operating arrangement for a sliding door (10), [having] comprising: a door lock (14), a latching device (16) which can be arrested in a positive-locking manner and [is] serves for holding the sliding door (10) in its open position, [and] an inside door operating means (18) having an inside door handle, [and] an outside door operating means (20) having an outside door handle, and a plurality of connecting elements (22, 24, 28) [,] including a first connecting element (22) coupled to the inside door operating means (18), a second connecting element (24) coupled to the outside door operating means (20), and a third connecting element (28), wherein the door lock (14) and the latching device (16) [being] are able to be operated mechanically by the door handles via said plurality of connecting elements (22, 24, 28), and logical functions for locking/unlocking the sliding door (10) [being] are realized in the door lock (14), and [driver elements (40, 42),] wherein the connecting elements (22, 24) are provided

with drive elements (40, 42) located between the two door handles and the door lock (14) [have] at a distance from the door lock (14), said driver elements (40, 42) [which act] acting via a driven element (32, 44) on the third connecting element (28) which is connected to the latching device (16).

4. (amended) The operating arrangement as claimed in claim 1, wherein the driver elements (40, 42) act on a reversing lever (32) on which the third connecting element (28) to the latching device (16) is secured.

5. (three times amended) The operating arrangement as claimed in claim 1, wherein the driver elements (40, 42) are uncoupled from the third connecting element (28) to the latching device (16) such that driving only takes place in a direction of movement of the driver elements relative to the connecting element (28).

9. (three times amended) An operating arrangement for a sliding door (10), [having] comprising: a door lock (14), a latching device (16) which can be arrested in a positive-locking manner and [is] serves for holding the sliding door (10) in its open position, [and] an inside door operating means (18) having an inside door handle, [and] an outside door operating means (20) having an outside door handle, and a plurality of connecting elements (22, 24, 28) [,] including a

first connecting element (22) coupled to the inside door operating means (18), a second connecting element (24) coupled to the outside door operating means (20), and a third connecting element (28), wherein the door lock (14) and the latching device (16) [being] are able to be operated mechanically by the door handles via said plurality of connecting elements (22, 24, 28), and logical functions for locking/unlocking the sliding door (10) [being] are realized in the door lock (14), and [driver elements (40, 42),] wherein the connecting elements (22, 24) are provided with drive elements (40, 42) located between the two door handles [and the door lock (14) have] at a distance from the door lock (14), said driver elements (40, 42) [which act] acting via a driven element (32, 44) on the third connecting element (28) which is connected to the latching device (16);

wherein individual ones of the plurality of connecting elements (22, 24, 28) are at least partially formed as Bowden cables, and said Bowden cables (22, 24) of the first and the second connecting elements from the door handles are continuous in a region of the driver elements (40, 42), [and] Bowden-cable sheaths (36) being omitted in said region; and

Bowden-cable sheaths (36) of the [door-handle] first and the second connecting elements (22, 24) are end molded onto walls of a housing body (30) on which the reversing lever (32) is pivotably mounted.

11. (amended) A system for operating a sliding door in a vehicle, the system comprising:

a door lock for securing the door in its closed position, a latching device which can be arrested in a positive-locking manner to hold the sliding door in its open position, an inside door operating means having an inside door handle, an outside door operating means having an outside door handle, connecting elements, and a driven element having opposed first and second ends;

wherein the door lock and the latching device are operated mechanically by the inside and the outside door handles via respectively a first and a second of said connecting elements; logical functions for locking/unlocking the sliding door are realized in the door lock; the first and the second connecting elements connect to the first end of the driven element and act via a pivoting of the driven element to drive the latching device, the latching device being coupled via a third one of said connecting elements to the second end of said driven element, and wherein the first and the second connecting elements are provided with driver elements located between the inside door handle and the outside door handle at a distance from the door lock.